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CHAPTER 2

THE RICE STANDARD

RICE IS THE real standard of wealth among the Min Chia. Direct barter of rice for commodities is common, rents are paid and calculated in rice, and rice producing land is the chief investment of the wealthy, and the principal source of revenue for the government. No other crop compares with rice either in actual value or in the estimation of the people. Land which is unsuitable for rice cultivation is hardly regarded as anything better than waste. In consequence of this preoccupation with the rice crop the Min Chia neglect the development of other forms of agriculture and have failed to exploit all the possibilities of land on which rice cannot be grown.

The Min Chia are rarely if ever found on land where rice cultivation is impossible, they avoid the mountains, and when the excess of population makes its impossible for all to engage in rice farming, they prefer to emigrate to distant parts of the Province rather than cultivate other crops upon the mountain sides. Whether this is to be explained as the failure of an immigrant people of lowland origin to adapt itself to the life of mountaineers, or as the whole-hearted conversion of a people, once pastoral hillmen, to the advantages of intensive agriculture, there is no direct evidence to show. The Min Chia lack any tradition of immigration to their present home, and it may be regarded as certain that they have practised their present mode of life for at least seven centuries.

Although there is thus an ancient tradition in support of rice farming, and an almost psychological aversion to living on the mountains, there are also strong economic arguments

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Ploughing flooded rice fields.

Transplanting rice seedlings.

[Face p. 24]

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243 in favour of rice cultivation. The yield of rice, very much higher per acre than that of wheat or maize, the alternative cereal crops, enables a larger population to live in a restricted area. Furthermore, the climate of Ta Li (though not of the northern Min Chia areas) makes it possible to grow wheat and beans on the rice lands in winter, so that two crops a year can be harvested off the same land. A comparatively small holding of rice land, ten Chinese acres (*mu*) or an English acre and a half, is sufficient to support a family of five persons.[1] Consequently there was little incentive to undertake the cultivation of maize or fruit on the mountain sides while population still remained low, or fresh rice land in adjoining valleys was easily available. When these conditions ceased to apply the tradition of rice farming had secured so strong a hold upon the people that they preferred to emigrate to great distances rather than abandon their manner of life.

243 311 423 Other considerations have combined to enhance the value of rice land and reinforce the hold which the "rice standard" has obtained on the Min Chia mind. Since the area suitable for rice is limited, and was long ago brought under cultivation, good land has acquired a scarcity value, and this in turn has been enhanced by the universal will to ownership. The poor seek to buy land even at great sacrifice, the rich regard land purchase as the only safe investment. To be landless is regarded as a grave misfortune, and even to have to rent additional land is considered regrettable. It is of course true that in a community without banks or joint stock companies, land is the best investment, indeed the only really safe one. Land will survive most calamities. Fire may destroy merchandise or a hoard of treasure, and insur-

804 [1] The *Mu* or Chinese Acre by which land all over China is measured, is not, however a fixed unit. The *Mu* varies slightly in every district, and even in different villages. In Yunnan the equivalent of ⅙ of an English acre to the *Mu* is approximately correct for the Ta Li district.

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243 311 423 ance is unknown. War or banditry may ruin a merchant, but a farmer will probably come through a period of disorder at least with his land intact and sufficient part of the crop to live on. Although public order in western Yunnan is now well maintained, it was not always so; even within the memory of men still quite young the roads were unsafe and one could not venture a few miles from the city without running the risk of robbery.

The peculiarity of the Min Chia system is not therefore the high value placed on land itself, but the exclusive preference for rice lands. If the lack of public security in the past was the only reason for high land values it would apply as much to the mountains as to the plain, indeed perhaps more, for the inhabitants of a mountain district would be too remote to suffer much risk of robbery or pillage at the hands of soldiery. The mountain lands, however, are not regarded as worth anything at all, they are not even owned. The whole surface of the mountain and its lower slopes is public land, or in other words free to all comers, waste, neither subject to rent nor tax. Yet, though certainly useless for rice cultivation, these lands if terraced could grow other crops, and are in fact covered with wild fruit bushes and forest.

The Min Chia therefore revolve in an economic vicious circle of their own making: rice cultivation alone is regarded as worth while, but as the area of suitable land is restricted it has become very valuable, and being valuable is regarded as the most desirable investment, which reinforces the importance attached to rice cultivation. Meanwhile, overlooking the rice plain of Ta Li, is a vast tract of waste land, certainly capable of exploitation, but which, being 438 mountain, the Min Chia farmer entirely ignores. Since the 435 whole of Yunnan, in common with the rest of south China, 511 also produces rice, and for the most part in sufficient quan-

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able, and cotton growing could not be attempted there. Silk, which can also be conveniently and profitably transported long distances on mule back, has been suggested. A few families on the Ta Li plain have taken up cocoon raising, but the technique is not generally understood, there are no large groves of mulberry trees, and many years will be needed before the production of silk can be of any commercial importance. So far the Min Chia have found no alternative to the opium crop. The government, as is now well known, have completed the remarkable motor road from Yunnanfu to Burma, which is connected with Ta Li by a short branch. The road was built by forced labour and as a war measure. A railway, which however will not pass within forty miles of Ta Li, is now under construction. The eventual benefits of these improved communications will no doubt be felt by the Min Chia, but at present they are more conscious of the demands on their time and energies.

The suppression of opium has therefore left the Min Chia for the present at the mercy of the rice standard, unalleviated by any cash crop raised for export. It is the working of this almost closed economy, as yet unaffected by any serious volume of intercourse with the outside world, which forms the subject of this chapter. Since rice is the dominating factor in this system it must have pride of place.

The method of rice cultivation is well known, nor do the Min Chia differ in this respect from other rice growing peoples. The rice is grown in seed beds planted in the latter part of March, the second lunar month, when frost need no longer be expected. The fields are cleared of the wheat and bean crop in May, and are then ploughed in readiness for the flooding, which is either effected by irrigation on land nearest the mountain, or by the monsoon rains which begin, on the average, at the end of May. As soon as the fields are flooded the rice seedlings are transplanted from the seed

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243 beds, an arduous task for which all the labour of the village, men and women, is needed. Once the transplanting is over, the crop, apart from a little weeding, is left to grow until it matures in October. The harvest at Ta Li is usually ripe by the beginning of November, when the fields are drained, and the crop gathered. One kind of rice, which has become popular in recent years owing to its higher yield, is called "Tiao Ku," "Dropping rice" because the grain falls very readily when ripe, and therefore has to be threshed in the fields and cannot be carried back to the farm house. Large baskets are taken out to the fields and the grain is beaten out into them as the sheaves are reaped. The usual method with other kinds of rice is to bring the sheaves back to the village where they are threshed on a prepared floor with the flail. The rice is then taken to the mill to be husked, or stored
376 until required. Husking is always done at a water mill on the Ta Li plain, as the abundant water power makes the use of the treadmill found in other parts of Yunnan unnecessary.

804 In the vicinity of Ta Li it is calculated that in a normal year one *mu* yields from ten to twelve Chinese pecks or *tou* of rice. The *tou*, like other weights and measures in Yunnan varies from one locality to the next, for though it is always made up of ten *sheng* or measures, these in turn contain a varying number of rice bowls, which being the only constant measure are the best standard for comparison. The following table sets out the measures as used in the Ta Li district and their equivalents in English measures.

Measures and weights compared

12 bowls = 1 *sheng* = 9 lb avoirdupois
120 bowls = 1 *tou* = 90 lb ,,

243 One sixth of an English acre (one *mu*) produces on average ten *tou* or 900 lbs of rice. If it be calculated that each member of a family consumes daily eight bowls of rice (four at

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each of the two meals) it requires approximately 25 *tou* to feed one man for a year, or 125 *tou* to feed a family of five persons. Taking the yield of the *mu* at 12 *tou* per year it follows that the produce of 10 *mu* (1 and 2-3rds English acres) is just sufficient to feed a family of five persons, but allows no margin for other expenditure. As the winter wheat crop also brings in a certain return it is possible for a family to live off 10 *mu*, which is confirmed by the testimony of Min Chia farmers themselves, who state that 10 *mu* is in fact the minimum holding necessary for a family to be self sufficient.

A poor farmer owning only 10 *mu* must however set aside one *tou* of his yield as seed grain, it being calculated that one *tou* of seed grain is sufficient to sow ten *mu*. It follows that most families having only 10 *mu* must in practice rent more land. Rents are paid in kind, at the rate of from five to six *tou* per *mu* of the rice crop and half a *tou* of wheat. Beans are not accepted as rent for the winter crop, wheat rents being calculated at about one tenth of rice rents, although the cash value of wheat is usually about one fifth of the price of rice out of season, and one tenth the price of rice just after the wheat harvest.

Large holdings are unknown in the Ta Li region, but many families have more than the minimum ten *mu*. Holdings of more than fifty *mu* are almost unknown, forty *mu* is the average of the most wealthy, and from this upper limit all gradations down to those who have less than five *mu*, under one English acre, are to be found. These small holdings are explained partly by the long process of subdivision occasioned by the break up of families, partly by the very high price of the land. The best rice land, that lying midway between the mountain and the lake, sells, even since the fall of values after opium suppression, for 200 Yunnan silver dollars the *mu*. At the rate of exchange prevailing before the war with Japan started, the Yunnan silver dollar was worth about

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ninepence, consequently the price of one *mu* expressed in sterling would be £7 10s. 0d. or £45 0s. 0d. per acre. This price means of course very much more in terms of the purchasing power of the Min Chia farmer. Before going further it may be as well as to say something about the currency used in western Yunnan and its equivalent values in sterling. In recent years the wide diversity of currencies in circulation in different parts of China have been abolished wherever the rule of the Central Government became effective, and a standard system of dollars and cents, the dollar being worth in normal times about 1s. 2d., has been introduced. This is called the National Currency. Unfortunately it has only just begun to reach Yunnan where the old chaos of varying currencies still exists, by no means simplified by the addition of yet another. There are in fact now five meanings to the word "dollar" in Yunnan : The National Dollar, the Yunnan Silver Dollar (supposed to be withdrawn from circulation but still in use in remote districts), the new Yunnan paper dollar, worth half a National Dollar ; the Old Yunnan paper dollar, worth only a tenth of the National Dollar ; and the Nickel dollar, of ten nickel cents, which only circulates in west Yunnan, has no actual existence (i.e. there is no such coin) and is worth about three pence. This last, the most local, is in fact the currency in which Ta Li prices are calculated, except for land, which is usually priced in Yunnan Silver dollars. It will be convenient therefore to express all prices in the nickel currency, but the following table of equivalents may be referred to.

YUNNAN CURRENCIES

Exchange rates of 1937

1 $ Nat. = 2 $ New Paper = 10 $ Old Paper	=	1s. 2d. sterling
1 $ Yunnan Silver = 3 $ Nickel	=	0s. 9d. ,,
1 $ Nickel = 10 nickel cents	=	3d. ,,

1: Fitzgerald H-5 (1937-1938) AE3 Sino-Tibetan Border Peoples AE3

434 their land, and thus obtain only half the crop from that por-
511 tion, their surplus for sale or exchange would only be worth
427 £5 os. od. There are many families, about one third of the farming population, in this situation. Perhaps another third have just enough land to live on without renting, and one third, rich peasants rather than landlords, possess a surplus of land which they lease to others.

With these small margins it is obvious that very little trade can be done with the outside world, or even with other parts of the province. Very different was the situation when opium was grown as the winter crop. Opium yielded sixty catties to the *mu* and sold for 6 $ Nickel the catty. In terms of sterling this is 1s. 6d. for one and a quarter pounds. Consequently the farmer realised £4 10s. od. per *mu* for his opium crop, or £27 on the acre. When it is realised that three acres of rice and wheat only yield crops to the value of £20, the consequences of the suppression of opium become plain. The family with three acres, eighteen *mu*, used to raise opium crops to the value of £87 os. od. in addition to their rice crop worth about £18 os. od. To-day all this has disappeared and they are left with the £20 os. od. return on their wheat and rice, of which half is consumed as food.

423 It is remarkable in these circumstances that the value of land has only fallen by one third, a proof of the high value the Min Chia attach to land as such irrespective of the return it gives. It is also curious that when opium was permitted and gave such high returns, no attempt was made to cultivate the poppy on the mountain slopes, where it would grow very well. Even with a cash crop worth four times the value of rice the Min Chia still had their eyes fixed on the rice lands and only grew opium when rice was out of season.

243 The farmer who cultivates more land than he and his fam-
465 ily can work does not always rent it out to others. He may hire labour at a fixed wage of 8 nickel cents a day and also

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provide the labourers with three meals of rice. Labour is engaged mainly in the planting and harvest seasons, and even large farms do not have hired hands permanently on the pay roll. A farm of forty *mu*, or about seven acres, which is large in the Ta Li region, would pay out not more than fifty dollars nickel in the year or about 12*s*. To which must be added the rice for the labourers' meals.

Taxation in Yunnan is light. The land tax and a tax on slaughtering animals are the only direct taxes paid by the people. The newly introduced income tax, first collected in 1938, only applies to the salaries of government officials and teachers, who can ill afford to pay it, and to merchants whose income exceeds 10,000 National Dollars per annum. There are none in this category at Ta Li. The land tax is levied only on cultivated land, and was formerly graded into three categories, applied to the best, medium, and poor land. In 1938 this was changed to a flat rate applied to all cultivated land without distinction. Collected in two equal instalments twice annually, the old tax was as follows:

Grade	*Tax per mu*	*Sterling equivalent*
Best land	4.00 dollars nickel	One shilling (6.0*s*. an acre)
Medium land	3.00 ,, ,,	ninepence (4*s*. 6*d*. an acre)
Poor land	2.00 ,, ,,	sixpence (3*s*. 0*d*. an acre)

The new system requires a flat rate of 2.40 dollars nickel from all land. This is also collected in two equal instalments at the end and in the middle of the year.

This new rate is about equivalent to sevenpence halfpenny per *mu*, which being very much lower than the old rate of a shilling on the best land, and not a very great increase over the old rate of sixpence on the worst, would

5:Graham E-5 (1933, 1941)1942 AE3 Sino-Tibetan
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Ch'iang

done in the houses or in Chinese temples or on the streets. Money may be paid, or exchange may be accomplished by means of barter. If two objects are bartered and they are of unequal value, the balance may be paid in cash or another object may be thrown in to make things even.

The principal market places are in the Chinese cities. Here the Ch'iang bring produce--firewood, corn, beans, wheat, buckwheat, pepper, walnuts fruit, vegetables, chickens, pork, mutton, eggs, hides, etc. With the money they purchase salt, cotton cloth, vegetable oil, and other commodities which they take home.

The interest paid on loans is very high. It varies from sixty or seventy to over three hundred per cent. This is one of the handicaps now faced by the Ch'iang. If the borrower does not pay, the lender sometimes sends a poor person to live in the home of the borrower and eat his food, smoke his tobacco, drink his tea, and sleep in his bed. This may cost the orrower a lot of money but in the end he must pay all the money owed, both capital and interest. He is not credited with what the poor man has cost him. Sometimes the lender comes and takes away a pig, a goat, or a cow. Often the interest is paid in corn. For a loan of one hundred dollars the yearly interest is from two to six dou or pecks of corn, so that the rate of interest depends on the market value of the corn.

3. Habitations and Villages.

The houses are built of unhown stones plastered together with clay. Advantage is taken of the flat and smooth sides, so that the walls of the houses appear smooth, and the corners square. There are two or more stories. The first story consists of a small open court and rooms or pens for the domestic animals. The floors of the pens are covered with small twigs, grass, or straw, which are trend upon for weeks and mixed with the offal of the animals, and later is used for fertilizer. People live on the second floor where dogs, cats, chickens, and sometimes other domestic animals and fowls range. The roofs are flat, and at the rear of each roof is an open shed in which corn and other grains are stored, and where the women sometimes do their weaving. Similar stone houses are widely used in the highlands of western Szechwan, Si Kang, and eastern Tibet. On the roof the grain is dried, flailed and winnowed, and here in fair weather the inmates visit and look around at

5:Graham E-5 (1933, 1941)1942 AE3 Sino-Tibetan
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Ch'iang

and a new plot cut and burnt. This practice is widespread in the mountains of West China. 241

3. Food.

The products of the soil are wheat, corn, buckwheat, millet, barley, beans, peas, potatoes, squashes, turnips, Chinese cabbage, celery and other vegetables, besides walnuts and fruits. Honey-bees are common. Often the bees are robbed of their honey so late that the bees starve to death during the winter. The domestic animals are dogs, cats, horses, cattle, sheep goats, pigs, chickens, and ducks. The main product of the soil is corn. Rice is not raised even in the valleys. 241 231 262 [243]

The above paragraph gives a clue to the food that is eaten. Most families can not afford to buy rice, which must be carried in from Kuanasien. Instead a great deal of corn is eaten. This may be made into cakes, or boiled almost dry and eaten like rice in bowls with chopsticks. Soya beans are made into bean curd, and white and brown beans are boiled. Wheat, buckwheat, and barley may be made into biscuits or cakes always unleavened, for there is no leavened bread among the Ch'iang. Wild fruit vegetables, and berries are sometimes gathered and eaten, and vegetables are sometimes dried and used in the winter time. Any kind of domestic animal or wild game may be killed and eaten with relish, excepting that there is a taboo against killing or eating cattle because they are used for plowing. Eggs are a luxury to be eaten on special occasions. On the whole the Ch'iang do not enjoy a well-balanced diet. 262 252

6. Clothing.

Most of the clothing of the Ch'iang is made of undyed hemp cloth which is woven by the women. Straw sandals are used less than among the Chinese or the Wa Sai. The women make cloth shoes that are more comfortable and more durable. The shoes for dress-up occasions are ornamented with vari-colored flowers and butterflies which are embroidered on the shoes by the women. Stockings are seldom worn. Instead, woolen puttees are wrapped first about the feet, then about the lower legs to the knees. 291

Both men and women wear trousers. The upper garment is a homespun hemp gown. In the front it reaches just below the knees. The gown of a woman is lower behind, reaching almost to the

mewu

Min-shan, and sold to the nomads. (2) These frames are put together 492

2. Compare Rockhill, page 716 f. Wooden frames are used as pack saddles for yaks and pien-niu. These are also customarily used in China. Cf. Rockhill, Plate 26.

by the nomads among whom there are regular saddlers. The wooden frame is /29/ put on a thick felt pad which serves as a saddle cushion and is covered with gaily patterned pulu cloth. The saddle is slightly upholstered and is covered with leather; often it is decorated with brass mountings. A person who is worried about the health of his horse ties a bundle of gaily colored silk ribbons on its mane. This must be consecrated by a lama.

Each tent has at least one or two dogs. One of them is kept on 231 a chain fastened to a stake, the other is allowed to run loose. In the winter a hole is dug for the chained dog so that he can protect himself from the cold. The dogs get to be about 80 centimeters tall and have a very shaggy coat, especially in winter, of black, yellowish brown or yellowish gray color. They are very alert and bark at the slightest provocation. Often every dog of a camp will bark for hours, especially at night, when they catch the scent of some beast of prey. It is very difficult to approach a tent because of these dogs. One always has to have hands and pockets full of stones to be able to defend oneself against them. One can approach a tent without danger 231 only when its inmates hold back the unleashed dogs. Riders like to 411 carry a stick 60 to 70 centimeters long, to which is fastened a whip of leather about 1 meter long, with an angular iron tip. When they pass or stop at a tent they twirl it about to protect their horse from the dogs. You often see horses with large scars on their hind shanks 231 from dog bites; they are, of course, particularly skittish and often become restless even when they hear a dog bark far off. The dogs are fed tsamba and whey, sometimes also meat scraps. A good watchdog costs about as much as a yak, a less desirable one, as much as a sheep. The dogs are allowed to grow old and die a natural death. A good dog skin which is preferred as a cover for the couch, costs up to $10 or more, sometimes, however, only $2. [237 435]

/30/ The only useful crop which the tent nomads plant is oats. 243 As we said above, each family sows some oats next to its relatively low lying winter dwelling. The crop is planted in the fifth Chinese month and is cut green in the ninth and tenth. It is used as fodder for the horses in winter, less often also as yak fodder. All the oat

Mewu

243 fields belong to the tribal head (t'ou-mu) and are distributed by him. Each family must pay rent to the t'ou-mu for the oat fields they cultivate, and this is usually paid off in the form of butter. The oat fields are ploughed by oxen only shortly before sowing time. The amount of oats planted is measured according to 1 to 4 days' work (tien), depending on the size of the family and their wealth in livestock. A day's work is usually 15 mou (about 1 hectare). The 222 tent nomads use very few wild plants. From the fifth to the eighth month they find many field mushrooms on the alpine meadows. They also gather chüo-ma, the edible tubers of potentilla anserina, which are cooked like vegetables, and the roots of which are used to 313 make incense sticks. Wood is needed only for tent stakes, poles for prayer flags and sheep pens. Pine is generally used, which is bought from the sedentary Fantzu.

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224 Hunting is not an important occupation because the Mewu-Fantzu are relatively strict Buddhists. They have no hunting dogs. Usually it is only by chance that an animal which may be valuable in one way or another is killed. Now and then a gazelle hunt is arranged. Trapping is not carried on. The game hunted includes groundhogs, hares, gazelles (Gazella gutturosa Pall.), blue sheep (Pseudois najaur Hdgs.), musk deer, foxes, wildcats, lynxes and wolves. The latter especially are feared because they prey on the animals; human beings are scarcely ever attacked by wolves. Birds [534] are not eaten and therefore not hunted. As an exception, a vulture is sometimes shot and the bones of its wings are used to make flutes. /31/

262 Since the tent nomads are exclusively cattle-raisers, they are restricted primarily to an animal diet. Their most important food is butter. As we have said, they keep it for a long time, although most of the people prefer fresh butter. They also eat dried casein in the form of a coarsely ground powder (Tibetan: chü-ra), sour milk and fresh, boiled milk. Whey is drunk only by poor people, usually it is fed to the dogs. All vegetable food and condiments, with the exception of mushrooms and chüo-ma, must be bought. The only important vegetable food is "tsamba" (parched barley flour), with which the nomads are always adequately supplied by neighboring sedentary Fantzu or by Chinese, who sell it to them [415] according to weight. It is stored in bags of coarse woolen material. Wealthy people at times deposit a large supply of tsamba, enough for two or three years, in a temple.

2: Rock K-5 (1934-) 1947 AF16 Southwest China AF16
Sino-Tibetan Border AE3

and Li-chiang. Their dwellings are made of braided grass and are covered with the bark of trees. The hair of the men is dishevelled. They wear short hemp cloth garments and trousers but no shoes. The women wear large copper ear-rings. Their garments are also of hemp cloth. They grow varieties of millet and collect *Huang-lien* for a living. Their disposition is weak [lacking backbone]. They pay no tribute. The majority of them live in caves in the mountains. They wear garments made of the leaves of trees. They eat hair and drink blood. They are like the people of extreme antiquity. The Ch'iu-tzu and Lu-tzu are neighbors, but the former are afraid of the la[illegible] and dare not cross their border. The Lu-tzu are akin to the Ch'iu-tzu, [illegible] their language is not the same. In their ear lobes they wear seven hea[illegible] wooden ear-rings. Now they understand the ploughing and planting [of] crops], and perform the work of the Lu-tzu by whom they are hired."

The Ch'iu-tzu, who call themselves Trun, are in the habit of putting resin from pine trees on the soles of their feet and then rubbing them in the dust. This is often repeated so that the soles of the feet become thickly encrusted and this prevents the penetrating of thorns, etc. The Lo-lo are also in the habit of doing the same thing.

9. ACROSS THE SALWEEN — MEKONG DIVIDE BY ZHI-DZOM LA (PASS)

Up Do-yon lung-pa from Ch'ang-p'u-t'ung. — Returning from Ch'ang-p'u-t'ung to the Do-yon lung-pa we climb its steep slopes through pine forest, then mixed deciduous forest composed of Quercus, Castanopsis, Acer, Tsuga and Picea, winding in and out and finally descending zigzag the slopes which drop off steeply into the narrow valley of the Do-yon lung-pa. At 8,000 feet elevation we enter magnificent wild walnut forest with Quercus (oaks) and Acer (maples), the undergrowth consisting of ferns, nettles, Elatostema, Acanthaceæ, Corylopsis, and Hedychium. Descending to the stream we cross it at 7,800 feet over a shaky log, and enter groves of Alnus trees, which not far beyond give way to dense forest composed of stately walnuts, oaks, etc. Waterfalls descend around us, and on the moss-covered boulders in the stream-bed lovely begonias receive a constant spray.

The trail descends once more to the stream-bed to a camping place at 8,000 feet among tall nettles. From here it leads steeply up again zigzag through dense forest. The undergrowth was slender bamboo, the trees belonged to the genera Betula and Acer, whose place higher up, at 9,000 feet, was taken by huge spruces (Picea) over 100 feet in height with perfectly straight trunks. The trail continues in deciduous forest of many species, several Acer, Araliaceæ, *Rhododendron sinonuttallii*, *Rhododendrun sinogrande*, 35 feet tall, with trunks of one to two feet in diameter, huge leaves and large inflorescences of creamy-white, large flowers with crimson blotches at the base, also fragrant Lauraceæ, etc. The valley widens considerably and on the upper slopes on the western side, at about 12,000 feet elevation, the forests give way to alpine meadows with bare rock outcroppings. In this forest the undergrowth is mainly composed of a species belonging to the family Acanthaceæ, with here and there a clump of cane-brake. The soil supporting this vegetation is a yellow clay. The trees were moss-covered

1 [i.e., the Ch'iu-tzu people — Hralyst]

5: Davies G-5 (1894-1900) 1909 AF16 Southwest China AF16
Sino-Tibetan Border AE3

take to talking Chinese and to practising some of the Chinese religious observances. Then the women even will learn to speak Chinese, will wear Chinese dress and even bind their feet. Finally the Lo-lo language is gradually dropped, and the young men grow up knowing nothing but Chinese. This stage once arrived at, the transformation is nearly complete, and the next generation will probably indignantly deny their Lo-lo origin.

The same process goes on with Shan and other tribes, but in Tibet exactly the reverse takes place. The Chinese become Tibetanised, and the children of a Chinaman married to a Tibetan woman are usually brought up in the Tibetan religion and adopt Tibetan customs. In Tibet proper this is perhaps not surprising, as the country ruled by Lhasa is practically an independent kingdom and the Chinese have little influence there. But in places like Chung-tien and other districts well within China, it is somewhat astonishing to find a regularly appointed Chinese official submitting to the indignity of being a complete nonentity in the country he is supposed to rule.

I think the reason of this may be partly found in the enormous power that the lamas wield over the laymen. Forming, as they do, nearly half the male population they have all the authority in their hands, and it would be impossible for a Tibetan to conform to Chinese customs or religious observances without incurring their anger.

Another cause which keeps the Tibetan from being absorbed may be sought in the cold inhospitable nature of his country. There is nothing to tempt the Chinese to emigrate into Tibet, and consequently they are never in ufficient numbers to influence the Tibetans round them. A similar cause has preserved some of the low-lying Shan States from absorption, the heat in this case being the reason that Chinamen do not settle there.

Chung-tien stands in a large plain which at the time of our visit was very bare, as the snow had only just melted off it. A little later, when the warmth of the sun has had time to act on the soil, damp from melted snow, green grass springs up everywhere. The height of the plain is 11,800 feet, and it is too cold to grow rice or even maize: wheat is the chief crop.